NBC NIGHTLY NEWS - ELECTION DAY 2000

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From Tuesday, November 7th, 2000 NBC NIGHTLY NEWS With Tom Brokaw

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decision 2000 from NBC News election headquarters in New York this is a special edition of NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw good evening and welcome to what promises to be a long and exciting night first presidential election of a new century could be one of the closest contest ever a long night ahead of a high-stakes political chess game with every state a critical piece on the board which is the electoral map Indiana and Kentucky the polls now have closed in those two states our projected winner is governor george w bush as expected he's also the winner in Kentucky again as expected so on our election night map those states won by governor Bush will be colored red throughout the evening I'm joined now by NBC's Washington bureau chief and moderator of Meet the Press Tim Russert Tim what do we know about Kentucky in Indiana tonight and how people voted and why Tom we know is that Kentucky in 96 and 92 went to the Democrats Bill Clinton carried them it looks as though george w bush is gonna carry kentucky by some 18 points men women geographic areas all across the board a solid wood in kentucky indiana bob dole barely won Indiana last time out 96 by 5 points it looks like George W Bush is gonna win by about 15 points in Indiana very solid victories in Kentucky in Indiana which means this Republican candidate is running a lot better than the last two previous Republican candidates that's why this race is gonna be so close Jim we want to point out to our viewers and a half an hour at 7 o'clock Eastern Time we have a group of critical states that will be closing their polls including the state of Florida by far the most important state for each of these candidates to try to lock in their column and that at 8 o'clock Tom Pennsylvania and Michigan all right Tim we'll be coming back to you later and throughout the evening as

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you later and throughout the evening as well of course also on duty tonight NBC's David Gregory who is in Texas with Governor Bush Claire Shipman in Tennessee with a vice president and NBC's Katie Couric here at 30 Rockefeller Plaza with details on why people are voting the way they are David we'll begin with you tonight in Texas please well Tommy even as advisors nervously pour over exit polling data this evening governor Bush tells reporters he is both calm and hopeful in fact which says the nervous ones in the family are his parents President and Barbara Bush who he called first thing in the morning to offer some soothing words the Texas Governor along his wife Florida cat Laura rather cast his ballot at 10:30 central time this morning just one short block from the governor's mansion Bush tells reporters he realizes after 17 months on the campaign trail his work is now done the coffee reporter hearts and souls in this campaign organization here in Austin around the country worked hard and and the people our people are gonna decide and I'm I trust the people I can trust their will after reading the Bible and serving his wife coffee this morning Bush called some voters directly in key states before he called into some radio shows on the west coast as well tonight the Bush family is going to have a private dinner before settling in with close friends and top aides in a nearby hotel suite to watch these returns come in it is an unusually blustery night here in Austin the capital city prepared for a party but inside the campaign the mood is decidedly tense one advisor told me a short time ago they are encouraged but with a race this tight nobody is prepared to dance in the streets around here for quite a while Tom thanks very much NBC's David Gregory and thanks for how much for your heroic coverage during the course of this campaign as well not a Nashville and the vice president's election day in

his home state NBC's Claire Shipman who's been there for the long run as well Claire what's the latest from Tennessee tonight well Tom al gore is holed up in the Loews Hotel here behind me still trying to get out the vote by remote and the campaign has

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the vote by remote and the campaign has dispatched high profile Democrats around the country to help in that effort Jesse Jackson is walking the streets of Philadelphia right now gore is in his hotel room doing satellite interviews with local TV stations because this race is so close members of his family are conducting radio interviews they're hoping to boost the turnout at the last minute if they can it has been a long day of course and for Gore it started in Florida in the wee hours of the morning with some overnight rallies later on he arrived home in Tennessee where he visited a polling place with his family and cast his ballot he had some supporters waiting for him there including elementary school students and he took the opportunity for a civics lesson when you vote you pick people to represent you and to make decisions that affect our country and affect our lives and so it's really important to choose carefully Tom the gore campaign says they are optimistic they have a victory celebration planned at War Memorial Plaza here in Nashville but the timing of course is uncertain from okay Claire Shipman and thank you very much for all the long hard work that you've conducted during the course of this campaign Green Party candidate Ralph Nader is waiting out the night's results in Washington after stopping at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia for news conference today he told reporters he was not in the race to help elect either one of the major candidates a reference to some Democrats complaints that he's taking votes away from Vice President Gore the if Nader can get five percent of the national vote his party will then qualify for federal funds in the presidential race in 2004 and for more now on the national vote let's go to Katie Couric who is outside on the plaza here at Rockefeller Center Katie has some early results from the exit polls that might give us some idea on how this night might develop Katie what do you have for us well Tom one of the most basic questions coming out of the exit poll tonight the mood of course of the electorate how do voters feel about the choice facing them the

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feel about the choice facing them the been a lot of talk about dissatisfaction in fact the exit poll shows a solid majority 59% supported their candidate without reservations and an interesting note this is almost the exact reverse of what voters said four years ago when 56 percent said they had reservations about their candidates voters today were also asked how they feel about a possible victory by each of the candidates if Gore wins only 17 percent say they'd be excited and a quarter said they'd be downright scared with the rest falling in the middle / bush almost the same sentiments less than a quarter would be excited twenty-eight percent are scared by the prospect and as for when people decided how they vote most people made up their mind prior to this last week but the number who did just decide is significant nearly 2 in 10 people and Tom not surprisingly those late deciders were much more likely to say they had reservations about their choice than those who decided earlier thanks very much NBC's Katie Couric we'll be seeing you through the course of this evening as well Katie and joining me again now is our NBC Washington bureau chief and moderator of Meet the Press standing back there as a big map Tim tonight a lot of shallow breathing a lot of for smiles a lot of white knuckles but the map will tell the story before the night is out time we've been saying for the last month there were 15 states too close to call and the voting is indicating exactly that and talking to people Florida tongue critical polls close there at 7 o'clock Pennsylvania critical and then there's v-shaped Tom you go up to Michigan Wisconsin Minnesota Iowa Missouri those states could very well determine what happens tonight we move out far west Tom Nevada Arizona New Mexico Colorado another u-shape if you will very very critical to see if there's any patterns that develop these candidates are now trying to grab every electoral vote they can they got to get the 270 neither candidate had a majority going into today's voting Tim the polls will close in Florida as we said just a

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will close in Florida as we said just a few moments ago at 7:00 eastern time tonight but that does not mean that we'll know who the winner is at 7 o'clock absolutely right because we only know what they tell us at the lead exit polls if it's too close to call we have to count ballots over and over over again listen to all those totals come in that could be 10 11 12 o'clock and then we go up to Pennsylvania and Michigan they closed an 8 o'clock Tom if those states are too close to call we could be here for a very long night by 9 o'clock tonight we will have about 460 of the electoral votes that will have been cast by that time but again we may not know exactly right if for some reason we knew that George Bush won Florida won Pennsylvania won Michigan would be very difficult for Al Gore but if Al Gore wins Florida then Bush must win Pennsylvania or Michigan and then we go into Minnesota a battleground state even though the Democrats have won at the last three times or Missouri a state that has become a true show-me state and this Senate race where a deceased man is on the ballot Tom's the thing about tonight is we don't know who's gonna be the next president this electoral map is so unpredictable isn't pretty unpredictable now as it was two weeks ago we just heard clerkship and describing how Al Gore is still working the satellite system talking to local television stations across the country his family members are on the radio getting out the vote is absolutely vital not only in the eastern part of the United States but in a lot of those southwestern states for him as well absolutely right in the state like Pennsylvania and Michigan where labor has really turned out everything they can and large african-american populations absolutely critical for a high vote for Al Gore to pull those states out that's why it's become battleground with a capital B this race is too close to call Tim let's talk about the historic anomaly what if someone wins the popular vote but loses the electoral college what are the chances of that happening tonight who knows it could happen and then the man who wins the electoral college is the President of the United States both candidates played by those rules Tom what if it's to 69 to 69 and I have gotten that calculation several times in

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gotten that calculation several times in trying to divide up the map the election then goes of the House of Representatives where each state delegation caucuses and decides who they vote for if they can't reach a conclusion you go to the Senate where a vice president is selected who becomes acting president both campaigns tell me today one of them's gonna reach 270 and it's worth pointing out that if it does go to the house it is the new house and it that new house that we'll be counting tonight as well as the United States Senate absolutely right and we don't know which party is going to control the house or the Senate it's that kind of night all right thank you very much NBC's Tim Russert we'll be hearing more from Tim during the course of this evening and of course we'll be paying much more attention to that map tonight as well a reminder once again those states that we color in red have been won by texas governor george w bush those that are covered in blue have been won by the Vice President of the United States Al Gore then there's that other race the historic battle for the United States Senate between First Lady Hillary Clinton and Congressman Rick Lazio in New York NBC's Andrea Mitchell had been covering that contest that has got the attention of the country and she joins us now with the latest on that Andrea Tom the polls won't close here in New York until about nine o'clock but early this morning the first family without voting they're their new home in Chappaqua New York for the first time in 26 years the president was not on a ballot and able to vote for himself he said he was at peace with that he then went back to their home and he started dialing radio stations talk shows around the country more than 30 of them to call for the votes for Democrats including his wife while they were fairly relaxed Rick Blasio was everywhere he was out trying to get the last vote first in Long Island and upstate greeting voters in Syracuse and Buffalo he has to get a bigger boat upstate in traditional Republican areas to make up for the traditionally Democratic downstate in New York City area and then he was back in New York City tonight reading commuters with the popular Republican Mayor Rudy Giuliani at his side but already tonight even before the polls close Tom the blame game starting among

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close Tom the blame game starting among Republicans the Republican governors wife Libby Pataki already saying that she feels that Lazio would have had a better chance would have a better chance to get Hillary Clinton if Rudy Giuliani had more quickly decided to get out of this race she apologized later but clearly

there's a lot of sour feelings there and this before the polls even Hilary Clinton of course trying to become the first first lady to ever be elected to office in her own right Tom Tom as you say the Democrats will need a big night to wrest control of Congress from the Republicans let's look first at the Senate where the Democrats need five seats to take control the key race to watch here is Virginia Democrat Chuck Robb must-win for his party to have any chance at the Senate Democrats then would need to win 6 of 7 close races in seats now held by Republicans they have high hopes of knocking off senator Roth and Delaware and Graham's in Minnesota and of winning an open seat in Florida but after that it's tougher in the house the Democrats need to pick up 7 seats to control that means they must win more than their share of the closed races the key to watch here in the House tom is whether Republicans can pick up enough say seats in the east to offset possible losses later in the night in the West tonight Republicans predict they will hold both the House and the Senate but perhaps not by much Tom all right thanks very much NBC's Lisa Myers tonight and well this national drama plays out in individual states cities and small towns across America voters are being asked to decide many questions that hit closer to home more on that here's NBC's Roger O'Neill in Oregon there's voters cramped tonight mind boggling way too many issues way too many measures the longest ballot in the country the candidates plus 26 statewide voter initiatives just two years ago another initiative made Oregon the only vote-by-mail state no voting

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the only vote-by-mail state no voting machines here the initiative process no one's better at pushing these citizen Crusades than Oregon's bill Sizemore seven of his initiatives are on today's ballot a process he likens to a civilized form of revolution instead of using the swords and muskets of the days of old weary vote more civil eight today we go to the ballot box Oregon was the first state in 1902 to allow voters with petitions to force you onto the ballot 24 states allow them now a nonpartisan group watching initiatives says there are 72 of these so-called bread-and-butter questions up for grabs today Arizona and Alabama ballots are crowded too with 14 initiatives each voters get extra time in Colorado to pull all the levers 12 initiative one deals with urban sprawl Colorado then now landscape photographer John fielder trying for a new focus his initiative promising controlled growth it's an attempt to stop this unethical leapfrog sprawl in the state tax reform always seems to dominate initiatives and today there are four proposals to give money back to taxpayers six states are asking how to spend money the tobacco companies paid to settle a lawsuit spending for charter schools and vouchers on the ballot in three states Oregon Colorado want background checks for all sales at gun shows that's the first four initiatives and six proposals try to okay the medical use of marijuana or make big changes in the way nonviolent drug users are sentenced in California it's a stay out of jail plan forcing users into treatment instead that's so controversial hollywood's west wing president martin sheen is campaigning against that proposition wants to legalize drugs about two hundred million dollars will be spent on the initiatives if history's our guide four out of ten will pass but perhaps more important in this election with a too close to call

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this election with a too close to call presidential race voter turnout increases as much as 7% when there's a good batch of initiatives on the ballot they say all politics is local but today more than ever with national implications Roger O'Neill NBC News Los Angeles raishin swept into office on the slogan it's the economy stupid now in the midst of the best economic times in America has ever seen voters tonight have some strong feelings about all that NBC's chief financial correspondent is Mike Jensen and he joins us now to put all of us in an election and economic context like Tom we found a lot of support for the Clinton administration's handling of economy and for many of george bush's economic proposals we asked voters how responsible is the clinton administration for the condition of the economy more than two-thirds of those polled 68 percent say very responsible or somewhat responsible a big part of that economy the stock market an astonishing seventy four percent of the voters polled have money invested in stocks or mutual funds or retirement plans are they worried about the future performance of the market 57% of the voters polled say they're not too worried or not at all worried but 43 percent are either very worried or somewhat worried would voters like to invest some of their social security taxes in the stock market as proposed by Bush 57% say yes

on other economic matters we asked voters what kind of tax cut they favor across the board as Bush suggests or targeted to lower and middle income people as core proposes a slight majority 52% say across-the-board forty eight percent say targeted what should the top budget priority be strengthen Social Security 37% cut federal taxes 29% reduce the national debt

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29% reduce the national debt 29% what's at stake in this election for investors we asked Wall Street economist Stephen Roche mr. Bush's policies would be a little bit better for the stock market but not by a lot that's the prevailing view most Wall Street experts say either bush or Gore would be good for the market and good for the economy as long as they don't give away too much in tax cuts or spend too much on new programs the analysts say what's really important is that neither party controlled the White House and the Senate and the House of Representatives Wall Street loves a stalemate in Washington Tom thanks very much NBC's Mike Jensen tonight us the country the media war on election day it comes down to arithmetic and to get the arithmetic right you've got to get your voters to the polls NBC's Bob for tonight on voter turnout from Stone Mountain Georgia where the corridors were crammed to a trendy motorcycle shop in Los Angeles a gym on New York's Upper East Side even mr. Rogers neighborhood in Pittsburgh polling places were packed about 20 minutes at the gap another 40 lines in Cleveland were so long voters were told come back later the people coming in waiting in power to vote those who can wait those who couldn't wait went to work you know they're discouraged unlike 96 when only 49% voted with lines this long rank didn't matter both Georgia senator Zell Miller and Congressman John Lewis had to cool their heels well I never seen anything like this in 40 years in Oregon where they vote-by-mail turnout is expected to hit an astonishing 84 percent it's a siege it's good it's people wind three deep at the counter turnout was especially heavy among older Americans I've considered I should say more than a preference I'd considered to be a duty to vote in

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considered to be a duty to vote in Florida 55 year-old Robert Winnick felt that way so strongly he had heart bypass surgery early so he could walk to the polls and vote everyone out there should vote so whatever happened to all those gloom and doom forecasts just a few months ago that this election would be a big yawn and that voter turnout would be dismal true there were some inducements voters in Burbank California earning themselves a free car wash some Georgia voters given a raffle ticket for a shotgun but experts are now saying that turnout is high because this election is so competitive it's a combination of greater interest in the election because it's closed and greater effort by the parties to turnout their supporters because it's close while it's too early to call today's turnout a record many experts agree this time fence sitters did climb down people came to the decision at the last moment you know to participate after telling everybody they might not an alienation alive and well in America not this day Bob for NBC News Atlanta let's Nightly News stay tuned for our special decision mm the election night coverage coming up along and very exciting [Music]

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